

## **REFLECTIONS ON AUSTLII'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY - WHERE WE CAME FROM AND WHERE WE ARE GOING**

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**Abstract:**

The Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) was founded 25 years ago as a joint facility of the Faculties of Law at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and UNSW Australia. It has become the largest free-access provider of online Australian legal materials, a founding member of the Free Access to Law Movement, and one of the largest providers of free-access legal information world-wide.

AustLII's guiding principle is that free access to key sources of legal information is essential in a democracy adhering to the rule of law, for the public, the legal profession and for researchers.

In 2020 AustLII's Australasian service provides nearly 900 Australian and New Zealand databases of legal information, growing at an average of 25 new databases per year, as it has since 1995. This data includes all five main types of legal information. AustLII offers unrivaled breadth in its coverage of current Australasian legal information, and increasingly comprehensive historical depth as well. AustLII's goal is that all significant public legal information relevant to legal research or practice, whenever created in Australasia, should be freely available, and searchable in effective ways.

This presentation will review AustLII's achievements over the past 25 years, provide an assessment of those achievements from the perspective of the national and international legal information 'ecosystem' in 2020 and consider what trends are emerging and how AustLII is planning to address them to ensure that we remain useful and relevant to the many communities we serve for another 25 years.

Issues to be addressed include:

- the provision of user-generated content using the AustLII Communities platform;
- the current interest in 'Legal AI' and AustLII's DataLex Legal Inferencing system;
- the meaning of 'comprehensive' legal information and the challenge of integrating the potential spectrum of information into the AustLII environment;
- sustaining a 'free access' model for the provision of legal information.